

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
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AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SHUM
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS: CASE OF FLAVIO TAVARES

REF: MONTEVIDEO 79 (NOTAL)

1. THE CASE OF BRAZILIAN JOURNALIST FLAVIO TAVARES, ARRESTED HERE LAST JULY UNDER ACCUSATION OF ESPIONAGE, HAS BEEN RESOLVED BY THE GOU WITH HIS EXPULSION FROM URUGUAY ON JANUARY 24. ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS REPORTS, TAVARES WAS PRESENTED EARLY THAT MORNING WITH A 24-HOUR DEPARTURE ORDER AND HE LEFT FOR BUENOS AIRES LATE THAT AFTERNOON. TAVARES, RECENTLY FREED UNDER CONDITIONAL LIBERTY (REFTEL) INDICATED THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE WITH HIS FAMILY ON TO LISBON, WHERE HE HAS BEEN GRANTED ASYLUM BY THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT. TO THE END OF HIS ENFORCED STAY IN URUGUAY TAVARES KEPT TO THE SAME PUBLIC LINE, NAMELY THAT HIS ACTIVITIES HERE HAD BEEN PURELY JOURNALISTIC; THAT HE REMAINED CONFIDENT THAT THE "MISUNDERSTANDING" WOULD BE RESOLVED IN HIS FAVOR; THAT HIS PRESENT HEALTH PROBLEMS ANTEDATED HIS
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IMPRISONMENT; AND THAT HE HAD BEEN "CORRECTLY" TREATED WHILE IN CONFINEMENT. WE WILL BE CURIOUS TO SEE WHETHER HE MAINTAINS THIS LINE AFTER REACHING HIS LISBON SAFEHAVEN.

2. TAVARES' EXPULSION CAME BARELY IN ADVANCE OF THE VISIT OF BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT GEISEL, SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 25-27. THE BRAZILIANS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY IN-

SISTENT THAT TAVARES BE GONE FROM URUGUAY BEFORE GEISEL'S
ARRIVAL SO AS NOT TO PROVIDE A POTENTIAL EMBARRASSMENT DURING
HIS OTHERWISE CAREFULLY STAGED VISIT. HOWEVER, IN TYPICAL
FASHION, WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A SIMPLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD DE-
CISION HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO DRAG ON UNTIL THE GOU WAS LEFT
WITH THE WORST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS. MONTEVIDEO IS ALREADY
INUNDATED WITH BRAZILIAN JOURNALISTS WHO HAVE NOT HESITATED
TO SEEK OUT TAVARES. AND, HOWEVER BLANDLY THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES
MAY PLAY THE CASE, THE CONCLUSION WILL INEVITABLY (AND
CORRECTLY) ARISE THAT THE GOU ACTED AT BEST RELUCTANTLY AND
ONLY AT THE BEHEST OF THE BRAZILIANS.
PAZZULLO

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